

AMIAA News

Publication of the Armenian Missionary Association of America
MAY/JUNE/JULY 2002 - Vol. XXXVI No. 3 (ISSN 1097-0924)

The Rev. Jirair Sogomian
Editor



**The Rededication Service of
KCHAG - Christian Endeavor Summer Center in Lebanon**
(See Story on page 17)

“And the Church Grew ...”

Rev. Jirair M. Sogomian

At this time of the liturgical year of the church, we find ourselves journeying through the long, inspiring and inspirited season of Pentecost, which reminds us of the phenomenal growth of the church in the first century. In spite of the attrition of the church in the west, statistics show that Christ's church is experiencing a phenomenal growth in the twenty first century, primarily in Africa, China, Korea and South America. With thankfulness in our hearts, we also praise the Lord of the church for the healthy growth of the body of believers in Armenia. The number of believers is daily increasing in our homeland, claiming more and more of our people to their forefather's faith and turning their hearts and lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The unusual growth of the church in Africa and Latin America, calls us to celebrate this season of Pentecost with a healthy consciousness that the Spirit of God is once again at work in our times as in the first century!

Quite often we tend to forget that the Christ who gave us the gift of the church is also the Lord of the church. We are tempted to think that the growth of the church depends solely on us, and wherever the church fails to grow we appeal to all kinds of gimmicks and human ploys to offset the rate of attrition, instead of praying to the Lord of the church and the Lord of the harvest! The beautiful season of Pentecost reminds us that, as disciples of Christ, we live and move and have our being in the One who not only is the Lord of the church, but also the Lord of the universe who calls us to humbly submit ourselves to the promptings of his Spirit, rather than fret in the anxiety of our spirits and redouble our human efforts as if all depended on us!

As those who are called to be sent out to teach, preach and share the Good News, we do not do so alone. We are the inheritors of a promise that we will not be laboring in God's vineyard alone, but will have the powerful presence of God's Holy Spirit who will teach us everything and remind us of all that Jesus had said to his followers. As such, Jesus urges us not to let our hearts be troubled and to do our work without fear (John 14). As ambassadors of Christ, called to tell the story of the One who emptied himself of his divine privileges to assume the limitations of our humanity, and who embraced death for our sakes to overcome by his resurrection the ultimate power of death to separate us from God, we must remember that we are empowered by the One who sent us to be his witnesses. So calm down and quiet your heart and remember that you are not alone in carrying on the sacred mission of

the church. We are not alone in this monumental task of bringing our people back to the God who called them out of the wilderness of their pagan ancestry to the only true God of the universe, even our Father in Christ. We have the companionship of the One who is powerful to recreate us and restore God's image in us, and to share with us his power to help us live our lives in the manner and spirit of the Christ who emptied himself.

If you happen to be one of those Christians who have already given up on our people and nation, given up on the restoration of peace in the Middle East, or for that matter, given up on peace on earth and goodwill among the peoples of this earth, just remember that we are not alone in this cosmic fight against the principalities and powers of this world. We are empowered by the Spirit of the living God who can do through us more than we can ever think or imagine. A Spirit who can take our foolishness to shame the wise, and use our weakness to shame the strong of this world, always reminding us that whatever happens in our mission is not the result of our smartness, but simply the work of the Spirit who enables us and keeps us faithful to the end!

This wonderful season of Pentecost – which stretches from the Day of Pentecost to the end of the liturgical year, the last Sunday of November that celebrates the Reign of Christ – calls us to live out the Christian life aware of a powerful presence in our lives that enables us to live boldly, abandoned to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and yes, even vulnerable to be accused of drunkenness, fools for Christ who live to the glory of God!□

Sold Out Crowd Raises \$130,000 to Support AMAA Orphans and Honor Joyce Stein

A festive circus atmosphere with colorful balloons decorated the Ballroom of the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills as the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Orphan/Child Care Committee held its fifth Children's Fashion Show and Silent Auction. A sold out crowd of parents, grandparents and well wishers were on hand to witness 45 children model to benefit the children of Armenia. Michael Agbabian was the Ringmaster and presented each of the children and spoke about their hobbies and what each child wished for the children of Armenia. The finale, a parade of the models, brought smiles and enthusiastic applause from those in attendance.

The luncheon was opened with a prayer by Mrs. Houri Melkonian and an inspirational devotional was given by Mrs. Penny Wood of Women of Vision challenging women to get involved and help wherever they can. She spoke of personal stories of need around the world and specially that of neglected children.

Among the sold out crowd was a contingent who had arrived just the day before from London to surprise Joyce Stein. The Stein's daughter Tina and her family flew to LA to be on hand as Joyce was presented with a plaque-letter of glowing tribute from the Executive Director of the AMAA, Rev. Jirair Sogomian, which was read by George Phillips, AMAA Vice-President and longtime friend of Mrs. Stein. Grace Kurkjian gave a short biographical sketch of Joyce Stein stressing the myriad of good causes that she has supported and is currently supporting. A congratulatory note was sent by Dr. John Khanjian, President of the Haigazian University, commending Joyce for her tireless efforts on behalf of the University in Beirut. A beautifully framed Lord's Prayer etched on silk was given to Joyce by the luncheon co-chair Diane Cabraloff, Gina Felikian and Sandra Kalemkarian on behalf of the AMAA Orphan/Child Care Committee. Joyce responded graciously by saying that it is a joy to serve the Lord and a joy to do what one loves. She thanked the Committee and everyone present.

Preceding the fashion show, a silent auction and chocolate boutique were enjoyed by the ladies who vied for the unique and valuable items. Dr. Lisa Karamardian and Gayane Tatoulian coordinated the silent auction while Barbara Poladian, who had made lovely Easter baskets full of yummy chocolate, sold them outright. The Orphan/Child Care Committee members gave full support to the luncheon chairs, Diane, Gina and Sandra and were delighted to honor their wonderful chairperson Joyce Stein. The event was also a financial success netting, \$130,000 for the children of Armenia who will enjoy summer camps, Christmas par-



George Phillips, Vice President of AMAA presenting a plaque to Joyce Stein.

ties, hot lunches and other necessities through the efforts and support of the ladies of Los Angeles and the countless hours of planning by the committee. □



The children in the fashion show (above). The AMAA's Los Angeles area Orphan/Child Care Committee members (below).

A Time in Talin

Colin Morris

My wife, Arpine, and I visited Armenia for two months in the late fall of 2001. It was a trip we had been looking forward to for a number of years. Indeed, this kind of trip would not have been possible without the help of Pastor Sarmazian, and the leader of the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada, Mihran Jizmejian. We were put in touch with Harout Nercessian of the AMAA Center in Yerevan who suggested that we might be of most help in Talin, a small town in the Aragats region, not far from the Turkish border. So it was with a sense of adventure that we stumbled down the steps on to the tarmac of Yerevan Airport in the predawn darkness of October 2nd.

Grateful for the van and driver sent by the AMAA, we lurched and rattled over the potholes through a suburb of nondescript, small shops and businesses with roll-up corrugated iron doors which reminded me of Nicosia in Cyprus fifty years ago. Modern capitalism showed itself here and there in the form of a brilliantly-lit gas station, a Western fast food outlet, a recently-built luxury hotel. We were taken to the AMAA Center where we aroused Sister Hannah, well-known for her ministry in Lebanon, who, good-humored in spite of the unearthly hour, showed us to a room where we had three hours of good sleep before getting up to take a look at our new surroundings.

Breakfasting later that morning, we had a magnificent view of Mount Ararat from the kitchen windows. It loomed out of the clouds in the hazy sunlight like something separate from the land below it. In the foreground was a jumble of roofs of various shapes and sizes with corrugated iron, the most conspicuous material. On gable and flat roof, large magpies strutted about and took off on errands into the middle air. To the north, in a shimmer of Turneresque light, the gigantic stacks of the Armenian nuclear power station sent up plumes of vapor, vertical in the still morning air. Behind them the extinct volcanoes of the Aragats Mountains ranged over the horizon. Somewhere over there lay Talin!



(l. to r.) Mrs. Sylva Yenovkian, Mr. & Mrs. Colin and Arpine Morris and Mr. Mihran Jizmejian.

But there was not much leisure for admiring the landscape just now. Sister Hannah was getting ready to go to Berd, a small town away to the north-east near the Azerbaijan border. The Lord had led her to minister to the needs of destitute, elderly people in that area. The other resident of the Center, Mike Balabanian, was alternately shouting into the phone (Only stentorian tones can handle the local version of Bell's invention!), and dashing about with building plans and contracts, preparing to drive over to Vanadzor, where he was trying to get the roof of the church building completed before the snow set in. We felt it was time we got going, too. We contacted Brother Armen Michaelian, the AMAA organizer for the Aragats area, and we were told that we could go to Talin with him on his regular weekly visit the next day.

In Talin the next morning, Brother Armen showed us around the two-story AMAA Center. The ground floor was used for church services and social gatherings of the Evangelical community; the upper story was devoted to the kindergarten providing free schooling and meals to some 50 needy children. As we were being shown around, it was explained to us that the rental accommodation which we had hoped for was unavailable. Shopping, too, was difficult in a place where supplies were sporadic, and one needed to know where to go and when. He had, therefore, made arrangements for us to rent a room in the house of an Evangelical family. We would eat with them and we might also like to contribute to the cost of any extra food we might want.

It turned out that the mother of the family, Haykush, worked in the kitchen of the kindergarten. We shook hands with her among the steaming pots and pans. As she was about to have her lunch-break, it was the right time to give her a lift to her home. Her house, a two-story stone dwelling surrounded by a large garden was five minutes away from the church. We lugged our heavy cases into the spacious bedroom on the second floor, just off the family room, in which we sat down and met Vahan, the husband, and also the three children just home from school. They brought us apples, fresh walnuts, home-made fruit juices, and Armenian coffee.

Arpine was rapidly growing accustomed to the Armenian spoken in the Homeland, but I was completely at a loss. I soon found out, however, that I could put to good use the Russian I had taken at the university. Almost every Armenian is able to speak Russian, many of them fluently. Vahan had done his military service in the Red Army as a mechanic/driver. Having completed his service, he drove a truck, distributing retail goods to state outlets around the country. He had a reasonably good living. When the U.S.S.R. fell apart, everyone in the country was adversely affected. The currency lost most of its value. In Talin, unemployment rose to 80%, about 1/3 of the work force left to find work all over the former Union. A few were able to emigrate to the U.S.A. Vahan now owns an old truck with which he does the occasional odd job a couple of times a week. Haykush gets a steady in-

come from her work with the kindergarten, but it is really very little.

The disappearance of the socialist safety net was not the only disaster to befall Armenia. Just over a decade ago, there was the devastating earthquake, the ruins of which we could still see, especially in Gumri, the country's second largest city. While we were there visiting friends, there were three young men who were killed while attempting to salvage steel among the unstable ruins that were once buildings. Add to these setbacks an economically draining war with Azerbaijan, and one is no longer surprised at the precarious state of the country.

As we walked about Talin we would often get into conversation with people on the street. Many of them had distressing accounts of sons having been killed on military service in Afghanistan or in Karabagh, of husbands abroad who had stopped sending support, of relatives being killed in the earthquake, of totally inadequate pensions and health care.

One woman, barely in her sixties, said she had nothing to live for, and longed for death, and she apologized for having nothing better to say to us. Everywhere we looked we saw the shells of houses and factories, the abandoned housing projects, construction cranes rusting away, a mute testimony to the vanity of man's hopes and ambitions.

In contrast to the despondency all around was the joy to be seen among the believers. On Sunday they arrive at Church, joy on their faces, their children clean and tidy. Loudly they sang the hymns, many of which they knew by heart. Those they did not know, they read off handwritten sheets. We were able to be of service here by donating money to provide hymnbooks. They were very alert during the service, and would answer any question the preacher directed at the congregation. I took the service one Sunday and Arpine translated for me. Occasionally she would hesitate over a word, but it would be supplied instantly by several voices. They were very interested to know how long we had known the Lord as Savior, and many of them could relate the exact time and circumstances of their own conversions. For most, their participation in large baptismal groups in Lake Sevan was the highest point in their lives, and they would proudly show us the photos of them-

selves in their white robes.

There were some eighteen young people in the Church who were undergoing leadership training. These leaders shouldered various responsibilities in connection with Sunday school teaching, and also the visitation of the sick, the needy, and those who were absenting themselves from the regular Church services for whatever reason. Arpine led these young people in a Bible study of the Book of James once a week, and I taught them basic English three evenings a week. We had a very happy time with them, and I was surprised at how quickly they learned. Only one of them had a Bible, but we were able to supply the rest with Bibles through our friends, Toros and Virginia Philibosian, missionaries from Cyprus working in Gumri. We were able to buy food to supply a couple of weeks' basic necessities, for about twenty families who were identified by the leaders as being in dire need. We walked through the dusty streets, with our heavy plastic bags of provisions, to poor but clean and tidy dwellings. We would sit down and read the Scriptures, trying to bring some spiritual sustenance together with our offerings of food. Several of the leaders were particularly good in relaying the message which had been preached the previous Sunday.

One of the things we really enjoyed was to have a feast, usually on a Saturday afternoon, either at the house where we lived or in the schoolroom in the church building. I found that \$100.00 would buy a good feast of the meat of a whole sheep, together with vegetables, salad, dessert and soft drinks for some fifty persons. In this way, under the guise of a birthday, or an anniversary, one could provide food for church members who might not have had a square meal for some time. As we sat enjoying the food and the company, those with the inclination would stand up, and hold forth eloquently on the significance of the occasion and propose a toast in honor of this, that or the other. This, of course, provoked a reply of equal orotundity. There would be spontaneous rounds of hymn-singing, and when spirits were thoroughly roused, there would be dancing. This was a bravura performance of vigorous and complex footwork combined with the athletic leaps characteristic of the Sassounis. A communal demonstration of joy!

My own birthday was celebrated with one

of these feasts. The event took place in the home where we were staying. The carpets were rolled up and stored in other rooms. The doors were taken off their hinges to leave more space for the trestle tables. The occasion was enhanced by the presence of a dear young friend, well known to the Armenian Evangelical Church in Toronto, Bedros Nigoghosian. He had come from Artik, a village to the north of Gumri, where he was preaching the Gospel, mainly among young people. Bedros had already been in Talin some months before, and so he required no introduction. I had one of the most enjoyable birthday parties of my life!

And so the weeks passed in a whirl of spiritual highlights and social encounters. The Bible-study group had nearly completed its discussion of the Book of James, my students were distinguishing the use of the present perfect from the past simple tense, snow covered the upper slopes of the Aragats Mountains, and the cold wind stirred the heaps of fallen leaves under the walnut trees. The nights grew long under skies of brilliant constellations, clearly traceable in the total absence of street lighting. It was time to go.

We were all silent in the old Lada, as it bumped its way out of Talin and on to the smooth asphalt of the motorway to Yerevan. The westering sun was sinking in somber glow casting long shadows into the distant mountain valleys, and throwing into high relief the foreground of dark, deserted factories. Vahan and Haykush began to get a little more cheerful as we neared the capital. They were, after all, going to visit some relatives and have a night out in the big city, when they had dropped us off at the AMAA. Still, they kept on saying it was a pity we were going away, and that it would be much better if we stayed for Christmas. We parted from them at the big, wrought iron gate of the AMAA courtyard, and stood waving as they drove off, a brave Christian couple, through whose kindness, patience and understanding we had been so blessed!

As our plane leveled out after take-off from Yerevan, and the jet-engines settled into a routine whine, I let my mind wander at random over the experiences of the last few weeks. And ever and anon, the same thought recurred insistently until it took the shape of a conviction: yes, we will go back!□

Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian's Statement On Behalf of the Armenian Evangelical World Council At the Second Armenia-Diaspora Conference

Your Excellencies, Presidents of the Republics of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh, your Holinesses and Beatitudes and Eminences, honored representatives of the Second Armenia-Diaspora Conference and dear compatriots: on behalf of the Armenian Evangelical World Council and the 155 Armenian Evangelical churches of Armenia and Diaspora, we greet you with warmest Christian love. We also wish to express our congratulations and gratitude to those who organized this second Armenia-Diaspora Conference.

We are well aware of the fact that this conference places serious responsibilities and commitments on the shoulders of its organizers and participants. This is the reason why the Armenian Evangelical World Council is participating in this conference with the prayerful participation of the representatives of Armenian Evangelical regional church unions in the world, namely, Reverends Vahan H. Tootikian, Jirair Sogomian, Réne Leonian, Harout Selimian, Henrig Shahnazarian, and Masters Mihran Agbabian, Harout Nercessian, Antranig Mardoyan and Mrs. Elizabeth Agbabian, and alternate members Reverends Aharon Sapsezian and Roupen Pehlivanian, and Mr. Hrayr Jebejian, and Mrs. Zabel Sapsezian.

On the occasion of the Second Armenia-Diaspora Conference, the Armenian Evangelical World Council wishes to bring the following important issues to the consideration of the delegates of this Conference:

First. Strengthening the Republic of Armenia politically, economically, militarily, socially, and spiritually. Like all Armenian organizations, the Armenian Evangelical World Council considers the stability and prosperity of Armenia an important priority.

For Armenian Evangelicals, our Fatherland, Armenia, is the solid and unshakable foundation for the existence, growth and development of the Armenian people. Our new and rejuvenated Republic is the indestructible anchor of our hopes and aspirations. It is the powerful testimony of the endurance of our ethnic genius, and the luminous guarantee of our future. For this reason, we, Armenian Evangelicals are committed to do our utmost for our homeland.

Second. Guaranteeing the independence of Artzakh (Karabagh). As in the past, today once again, we, Armenian Evangelicals, reiterate our resolve to support a fair and comprehensive settlement of the Karabagh problem, based on the self-determination of its people.

Third. Halting the emigration (exodus) of Armenians from Armenia and Karabagh. Cognizant of the complexity of this problem, we still believe that certain immediate measures should be taken to slow down and eventually halt the emigration of our people from their homeland. We strongly believe that the government of Armenia should raise the living standard of its citizens. It should take drastic measures against corruption, bribery, redtape and exploitation! Furthermore, the government should create such a trustful atmosphere that foreign companies, as well as Diasporan Armenian businessmen may be encouraged to embark upon financial investments in Armenia to improve the economic conditions of our country.

Meanwhile, however, we, Diasporan Armenians have a moral obligation of not only helping our compatriots in the homeland, but also helping create new job opportunities.

Fourth. Strengthening the ties of communication between the Fatherland and Diaspora by narrowing the linguistic gap between Eastern and Western Armenian languages. To that end, we propose the restoration of the classical Armenian orthography, the pre-Soviet Mashtotzian orthography. We believe such a wise step will be a most conducive factor to enhance and promote the cultural bond between Armenia and the Diaspora.

Fifth. Planning and organizing future periodic Armenia-Diaspora conferences for the purpose of addressing important issues which affect the collective life of Armenians and the future of Armenia. However, since these conferences are so multifaceted and complex, they need to be well-planned in advance. They need to be representative in nature, with proportional representation from various segments of the Armenian community. They should address

our national priorities. And they should review and evaluate the implementation of the adopted resolutions of previous conferences.

Sixth. Strengthening the most important components of our culture, namely, the Armenian churches, homes, schools, institutions and the press, which have played a crucial role in the survival of the Armenian nation. Of vital importance today is the maintenance of our educational and cultural institutions on a high level. To that end, it is vital that we encourage both morally and financially our educators, intellectuals, scientists, artists, and all those who are dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of the Armenian culture, heritage and values.

Seventh. Respecting the human rights of all Armenians, including the rights to freedom of religion and worship, freedom of conscience and speech. It is no secret that both in Armenia and Diaspora, we have people of various ideological, confessional, political and denominational affiliations. These differences should not be considered a source of curse. In our national life what is expected and desirable is not uniformity; rather, unity in essential matters. We believe that each religious, political, cultural, and philanthropic entity has its input and contribution to our national life, and should not be viewed and treated with prejudice and discrimination. We all form one link, for we have a common history, a common memory, and a common destiny. We all belong to one race and we all are compatriots. Let us not lose sight of the fact that patriotism and service to one's country is not the monopoly of any organization; rather, it is the privilege and responsibility of all.

Thus, it is our firm belief that on all fronts of our national life, it is the sacred duty of all Armenian organizations to unite in their collective efforts and mobilize all their assets for the sake and for the benefit of our beloved nation, our magnificent culture and our ethnic values, with the full realization that Armenia and the Armenian nation can exist without any one of us but we cannot exist without them.

May God bless the Republics of Armenia and Karabagh and the entire Armenian nation!□

The Second Armenia-Diaspora Conference

Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian

The Armenia-Diaspora Second Conference was convened on May 27-28, 2002, in Yérévan, Armenia, attended by over 3000 (three thousand) Armenian lay and spiritual leaders — government officials, clergy, statesmen, intellectuals, political and community leaders from both Armenia and Diaspora. The Conference was organized and chaired by Armenia's Foreign Minister, Vartan Osganian.

The General Assembly meetings were held at Garen Demirjian Cultural Center (the former Concert and Sports Complex, *Hamalir*), and the four thematic sessions were held at the Government Reception Hall.

Around a large table in the Center's main auditorium, the Presidents of Armenia and Karabagh sat together with their prime and foreign ministers along with the heads of all Diasporan organizations (churches, political parties, and charities) as well as the representatives of the Armenian communities of all country delegations.

The Armenian Evangelical World Council was headed by the Council President, the Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian. The delegation consisted of the following members: Reverends Vahan H. Tootikian, Jirair Sogomian, René Leonian, Harout Selimian, Henrig Shahnazarian, and Masters Mihran Agbabian, Harout Nersesian, Antranig Mardoyan and Mrs. Elizabeth Agbabian, and alternate members Reverends Aharon Sapsezian and Roupen Pehlivanian, and Mr. Hrayr Jebejian, and Mrs. Zabel Sapsezian.

During the Second Armenia-Diaspora Conference, The following projects were adopted:

1. Computerization of Schools. The objective is to computerize all 1500 schools in Armenia and another 200 in Nagorno Karabagh. Of this total, 300 will be connected by 2003, through the resources of existing programs. The target is the completion of the remainder by 2005.

2. Center For Genocide Studies. A research and publication center for the study of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 is necessary in Armenia. Although, in the last 87 years, there has been historical, analytical, narrative, anecdotal, biographical and personal research,



The Armenian Evangelical participants at the Conference. (l to r) Mr. Hrayr Jebejian, Rev. Harout Selimian, Rev. Jirair Sogomian, Rev. Vahan Tootikian, Rev. René Leonian, Mr. Harout Nersessian and Rev. Henrig Shahnazarian.

it is necessary to augment this effort, systematize it and encourage a new generation of scholars. A center which is staffed and developed by joint Armenia-Diaspora effort.

3. Virtual Armenian Studies University. This project will establish an internet-based university to provide resources and courses in Armenian studies. A combination data base and on-line classes will provide teachers, scholars and students an opportunity to exchange ideas, study the past and analyze current and future issues. A curriculum devised by practitioners will provide a model for Armenian studies at the high school and college levels.

4. Committee on Curriculum. This committee will provide a forum for Armenian educators to meet and discuss various approaches for teaching Armenian language, culture and history. Aspects of such a curriculum may be adopted by schools and educators in Armenia and the Diaspora.

5. Identifying and Supporting Armenian University Students. A committee of university students and professors will devise a program to identify, track and support college students. They will devise ways to provide attention and assistance to individuals, as well as student groups capable of initiating activities and promoting visibility. A network and database of student groups capable of initiating activities and promoting visibility will be the launching pad for finding scholarship sources, encouraging civic involvement, and facilitating higher education for

capable and deserving students who desire a university education and are aware of its future benefits.

6. Regional Health Center. The purpose of this complex, multi-dimensional project is to bring together all appropriate resources from the Diaspora and within Armenia and Artsakh together to create and establish in Yerevan a world-class health care center. It will be the objective of this center to develop and provide medical facilities anchored by a hospital and equipped with all modern and up-to-date technologies, specialized institutes, clinics, short and medium term convalescent facilities to provide access to clients and patients from the region.

7. Diaspora Museum. The purpose of establishing a Diaspora Museum in Armenia is to create a repository of artifacts, icons, material, archival evidence, a narrative of the life of communities. This proposed museum will be built through the combined resources and planning of Armenia and the Diaspora and will be based in Armenia.

Besides these projects, the Second Armenia-Diaspora Conference also adopted a communiqué reiterating the collective will of all Armenians to support Armenia as well as to defend the right of the people of Nagorno Karabagh to live securely and with dignity in their own land.

The conference concluded on the evening of May 28, with a celebration at the Sardarabad Memorial, marking the 84th anniversary of the battle of Sardarabad. □

Near East Visit - 2002

Louis Kurkjian

The annual UAECNE/AMAA Mission partner discussions were held in the Near East from 19-29 April 2002. AMAA participants included Rev. Jirair Sogomian, AMAA Executive Director and Louis Kurkjian and Herair Mouradian, co-chairs of the Near East Committee. The following is a summary of the visit.

- Throughout the visit, there were numerous opportunities for Rev. Jirair to participate in pastoral activities. This included preaching at the Nor Marash Church in Beirut on April 21 and in Kessab on April 28. The AMAA Executive Director was the primary speaker at the April 24 commemorative services in Beirut and Aleppo, which included Armenian Apostolic and Catholic clergy. He had the opportunity to meet with the Near East leadership, with the individual pastors in Lebanon and Syria and with donors to the AMAA.
- There is a continuing flow of young people into the educational system leading to Christian work and ministry. Four Armenian males will receive their M.Div. degrees in the next 3 ½ years. Christian Endeavor (CE) is a source of these youth and is very active in Lebanon. CE activity in Syria needs additional leadership and plans are being finalized for this need. The Near East will continue to become a major source of Christian leadership to the Armenian Evangelical community worldwide.
- The economic situation has worsened in Lebanon and Syria. Unemployment has grown and relief assistance is needed for an increasingly growing number of families. Social action efforts are organized in Lebanon and are effectively working in the community. A "committee" approach to social action is being established in Syria for increased efficiency. Social action is a priority area for AMAA support; this need will continue until there is significant improvement in the economy. AMAA support to the Union and to pastors will need to continue for the foreseeable future.
- The economic situation also has a direct impact on the schools, as many families cannot even pay discounted tuition. Operating

deficits caused by the economy are affecting the schools. Cost reduction is urgent for the schools in Lebanon. In meetings with the Educational Council, they were urged to provide leadership with proposed actions to reduce cost and develop a more balanced school system. The AMAA will continue to work with the Near East leadership on this issue.

- The schools in Syria are centrally managed and with a modest increase in AMAA support can be at an operating break-even position. Improvements are needed at the schools and a prioritized request for AMAA assistance will be forwarded for Board consideration.
- During 2001-2002, 1490 students in Lebanon and Syria are eligible for the AMAA \$200 annual educational sponsorship. The AMAA longstanding goal has been to provide educational funding for all qualifying students. At this time, AMAA support covers 765 students. Filling this support gap is critical for school system stability. AMAA priority must be focused on increasing donor funding and using appropriate endowment income for this need. It is noted that annual tuition fees, depending on school and grade level, run from \$600 to over \$2,000.
- Union outreach to the countries under their leadership is progressing. Visits will soon take place to Greece, Cyprus and Turkey. Country representatives are being more fully integrated into Union activities and meetings. The AMAA encouraged this endeavor and will support strengthening these ties with the UAECNE.
- Real Estate issues are numerous and are being addressed. Title problems on Union and AMAA-owned properties are being corrected. This effort will continue into the next fiscal year and AMAA support is needed. The Union headquarters move to CMC is being planned. It will effectively serve the needs of the Union and also can provide income from the added space that will not be



Rev. Megerdich Karagoezian presenting a donation to Rev. Jirair Sogomian on behalf of the Nor Marash Church.

used by the Union. A unique opportunity may exist for the use of the Philibosian school property which has been up for sale; the Union is exploring the possibility of World Vision using the property as a children's center. A petition has been cooperatively filed with the court system in Syria to divide the Aleppo College property. When this is accomplished, a major asset will come into the hands of the Evangelical community in Syria that could be developed and become income producing.

- Additional audit reports are ready and have been provided to the AMAA. There is an appreciation of the value of these reports, but there is also a desire to be cost conscious in preparation. Approval and release of AMAA guidelines for reporting will be of assistance to the Near East organizations.
- The improvement in "mission partnership" between the UAECNE and AMAA was noted in many of the discussions. The spirit of openness and cooperation is continuing to build trust. The annual visit to the region is mutually felt to be meaningful, productive and necessary.

The AMAA has a mission, which has geographically broadened in the last decade, with major projects in Armenia and other locations. Its roots began with support to the Near East over 80 years ago and the needs there have both continued and are growing. Your contributions to the AMAA have a major impact in spreading God's word and in providing humanitarian and educational support to our worldwide Armenian community. Proverbs 3:9 tells us to "honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the first of all you produce, so your barns will be filled with plenty." □

The Armenian Evangelical Church in France

Rev. Jirair Sogomian

As promised to all the pastors and church representatives in France, I begin the report on my attendance at the 72nd Synod of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in France by conveying their warm greetings and salutations to the AMAA Family, along with their deep gratitude, publicly expressed on several occasions, for all the help and support the AMAA extends to them in their various needs and mission projects. Needless to say, I also conveyed your greetings to them as I addressed the pastors, delegates and guests on several occasions.

The eve of the Synod was dedicated to the meeting of the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Europe, with reports of all mission activities in Belgium, Greece, Turkey, Germany, United Kingdom and Bulgaria by Rev. Gilbert Léonian, who chairs the Fellowship. Also present for the occasion were The Rev. and Mrs. Paravazian who reported in detail about the churches in Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna and Roussé. We discussed the needs of these churches and the support of the AMAA to two young men who are studying at the NEST in preparation for ministry in Bulgaria, and the sending of an evangelist from Armenia, who will serve as our missionary in Varna beginning August 1, 2002.

The 72nd Synod Meeting of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in France covered the remaining three days, May 8, 9 and 10. The daily schedules included morning worship, a variety of reports which covered the financial and administrative life of the churches, reports from the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Europe, the Armenian Evangelical World Council, and the AMAA. There were also a dozen reports from auxiliary organizations, covering their mission to the youth, their camps (La Source and La Fontanelle), Hope for Armenia, and their publications (the Panpere Revue and Le Lumignon). I was privileged to address the Synod on three occasions: The first, as I preached my first sermon in French, as I reported to them on the life and activities of the AMAA, and a final reflection on the role that the AMAA will continue to play in their

future plans and local mission.

A welcome break from the daily schedule of meetings was the ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone of a new sanctuary to be built across the street from the present facilities of the host church, the St. Antoine Armenian Evangelical Church of Marseilles, the Rev. George Dabbo, pastor. Taking advantage of a break in a rather constantly rainy weather, an enthusiastic group of church members and delegates sang, prayed and joyfully rededicated themselves to the mission of Christ's church.

During those days, I also carried several private consultations with representatives of churches, mission organizations and pastors on a variety of common concerns in the mission field. Of primary importance were discussions carried on with The Rev. Paravazian regarding our work in Bulgaria, with The Rev. Georges Dabbo, regarding the forthcoming building of a new sanctuary for the host church at St. Antoine, with Mr. Serge Kurkdjian, who chairs Hope for Armenia; Mr. Ari Topouzkhianian, regarding our participation in the printing of the new Western Armenian Bible he has initiated and worked on for the last seven years, and our publication of "Our Daily Bread"; the Rev. Gilbert Léonian, present chair of the Union, regarding a number of pressing issues of common concern; and a few others on a variety of mission topics. All in all, there was



The participants in the 72nd Synod Meeting of the Armenian Evangelical Union of France (above). The ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone of a new sanctuary of St. Antoine church (below).

great appreciation expressed regarding AMAA's presence and participation at this Annual Synod Meeting in rainy and flooded Marseille.

In a constantly shrinking world and our rising consciousness of the Armenian Evangelical world-wide family, every opportunity to connect and participate in gatherings, synods and activities beyond our limited borders, gives us a precious occasion to bond with members of our world-wide family and to renew our common sense of mission in spite of our marked differences in church polity and cultural nuances. Such connections give us a keener sense of the universality of the church as a body that rises above all the differences and separations that the world imposes upon us, and unites us with a common sense of purpose and a love that conquers all that separates us from God and each other! □

Meridian School's Anniversary Banquet Highly Successful

The Meridian Armenian Evangelical School celebrated its "20 Years of Service to God, Community and Nation" with an elegant banquet organized by the Board of Directors and the Women's Auxiliary. Attended by over 300 supporters and constituting the seventh of jubilee events this year, the banquet was held at the Ararat Home Deukmejian Grand Ballroom in Mission Hills, CA, on Saturday, March 9, 2002.

Banquet co-chair, Mrs. Elizabeth Agbabian, welcomed, congratulated, and thanked the attendees. She was followed by Mrs. Elise Tashjian and Mrs. Esther Assilian with a performance of the US and Armenian national anthems. Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, the moderator of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), gave the invocation.

Mr. Zaven Khanjian, the chairman of the Board of Directors, in his introductory remarks underscored the importance of this milestone achieved through the determined efforts of many individuals and organizations who deserved due praise and appreciation as exhorted by the Bible. He also stressed the fact that the 20th anniversary celebrations should be an occasion for the school to undergo self-criticism, reevaluation and the establishment of a renewed vision. The audience then learned of a most auspicious development—the expansion of the campus by 5,100 square feet of land that was donated by Mr. Thomas Von Der Ahe of the VDA Property Company. The donor was accordingly recognized with a token of appreciation.

Mr. Khanjian then proceeded to introduce the master of ceremonies, Mr. Hrant Agbabian, himself a founder and a longtime supporter of the school. After making a few humorous remarks about the cosmopolitan nature of Armenians, Agbabian acknowledged the presence of guests and dignitaries from the Armenian Missionary Association of America, the AEUNA, and the Armenian community at large who were in attendance.

Mr. Khanjian once again took the podium for special acknowledgments. The honorees



included founding members of the school, identified throughout the evening by blue ribbons of recognition, who received copies of the book, *Armenia: The Story of A Place in Essays and Images*, as a token of appreciation. They likewise included two founders of the school, Rev. Dr. Vartkes Kassouni and Mrs. Alice Jernazian Haig (founding chair), who were instrumental in the establishment of the school. As such, they were awarded special plaques of appreciation and gratitude.

Past and present Board members and involved individuals Harold DeMirjian, Koko Balian, Herair Mouradian, Hratch Sarkis, George Phillips Sr., George Phillips Jr., Dr. Misak Abdulian, Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, Zaven Hanessian, Vahe Ashkarian, Sebu Tashjian, Hagop Loussarian, and Lucina Agbabian Hubbard were also recognized for their dedicated service to Meridian School over the years. Similarly, past and present principals, as well as a number of teachers and staff members with many years of distinguished service, were accorded unique gifts.

A touching 20th anniversary cake ceremony followed suit, whereby the audience sang happy birthday and blew the candles, thus renewing their commitments of support to Meridian School. In the same vein, the school choir, directed by Mrs. Victoria

Abrahamian Elyasi, entertained the appreciative guests with a delightful rendition of English and Armenian songs.

At this time, alumnus Heghine Aslanian, now a graduate student at UCLA, spoke highly of the sound academic and moral education she and countless other youngsters had received at Meridian, carrying them through higher education. Mr. Agbabian then invited Mr. Aram Saroyan, son of William Saroyan and an author in his own right, to deliver the keynote address. Saroyan the son recounted some of his experiences as a young student and as a young father through a chain of thoughts. Moreover, he spoke about his relationship with his father and their last encounter. He concluded by thanking the organizers for inviting him and giving him the opportunity to address an Armenian audience.

In his brief address, principal Dr. Vahram Shemmassian likened Meridian to an addictive passion fruit whose tree required grafting in search of more succulent variations to be able to embrace the future with fresher aroma and nectar.

Mr. Agbabian then presented Mr. Zaven Khanjian with a gift of appreciation from the Board of Directors and the Women's Auxiliary for his 20 years of dedicated service to Meridian School in various capacities.

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Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary of Los Angeles Donates \$30,000 toward Scholarship for Needy Armenians

The Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary proudly presented to President Dr. John Khanjian, a check in the amount of \$30,000 toward scholarships for needy Armenian students – one of whom will be an orphan girl from Aleppo. The gifts will also benefit Haigazian's renovated Media Center.

Haigazian University was established in 1955 as a liberal arts institution of higher learning, using English as the language of instruction. It offers the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees. All three are recognized by the Lebanese government and Association of International Colleges and Universities.

Dedicated to excellence in the liberal arts and professional education, the University strives to prepare men and women who are inspired to serve with purpose and generosity in their communities while conscious of living in an interdependent and



(l. to r.) Julie Aharonian, Dr. John Khanjian, Joyce Stein and Sirvart Mouradian.

multicultural world.

Haigazian's founders were initially interested in providing quality higher educa-

tion to young Armenians of the diaspora who often had insufficient resources for advanced study.□

Merдинian School's... continued from page 10

The banquet, a definite success, concluded with the benediction of Rev. Jirair Sogomian, the Executive Director of the AMAA, who wished Merдинian many more years of successful progress.

As a bonus the banquet guests got to view a unique photo exhibit depicting everyday life at Merдинian school since its inception in 1982. Also, the guests took home an attractive anniversary booklet that included a chronology of Merдинian's evolution, messages, pictures, and letters of congratulation. All these were in tribute to a success story.

This 20th anniversary function was also successful in terms of the donations and pledges made directly to the school or to its numerous endowment funds amounting to over \$150,000.

Merдинian School is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for the maximum possible term of six years. For information about the school, which educates children from preschool through middle school, please contact the school office at (818) 907-8149.□

A NEW LIBRARY OF THE ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF TRAD



The Armenian Evangelical School Christian Social Center of Trad, located in one of the poorest sections of Bourdj Hammoud, in Lebanon, opened a new library in the school for the use of the students. Since there are no public libraries in the area and not many books at homes, the school intends to open the library for parents as

well. The Armenian Missionary Association of America supported all the financial expenses of the construction of this new library. With the granted help, the school was also able to repair all the desks of the students and have new desks and chairs for the teachers. The opening of the library took place on February 22, 2002.□

An AMAA Legacy in Armenia

A Brief Report on the Effects from the Haigazian University College Graduate School of Management

Louis D. Volpp

The year 1992 was a bleak one in Armenia. The earthquake, the fall of communism, and the flow of refugees from Azerbaijan combined to make conditions most difficult. Late in the year, an extraordinarily harsh winter added to the misery.

A bright spot in the lives of about one hundred young men and women was the promise of a new Haigazian University College Graduate School of Management (HUCGSM). They came with skepticism, disbelief, and cautious hope. They were bright people educated under the communist system, seeking something better for themselves and their families. They had a reserve arising out of a fear that what was promised would not become real.

The students completed a preparation program in August 1992. It was mainly a program in English to prepare them well enough to engage in graduate study in the United States at the better graduate schools of business. Forty-three were judged to have met that standard and entered the MBA program in September. Of those forty-three, thirteen met the standards for graduation in July 1994. This little report is about what they are doing now, so I won't review the hardships that beset these students during those two years. I do want to note for the record that this was the best time of my forty-year teaching career. My wife, Hollie, and I fell in love with these students and will always be grateful to them for the marvelous experience we had in Yerevan.

Gohar Abajian is now working in research at International Monetary Fund, European Department. Her work is concentrated on economic indicators for the former USSR countries, including statistical analysis of economic data. Prior to that, she worked at World Bank in the Europe and Central Asia Region, designing management and accounting systems for a \$5million loan to Armenia. Before that, she worked at World Bank in Washington as Financial Analyst dealing with energy, drinking water and irrigation in Armenia. She developed financial projections and tariff calculation models of a \$53million loan for the

Electricity Transmission and Distribution Project in Armenia.

Gohar says, "The Haigazian experience was the first step to becoming an independent person in life. In addition to professional growth and new opportunities in my career, it made me (and I value it most) a mature person, who is able to make decisions, has self-esteem and confidence, and can think clearly (as opposed to fuzzy thinking that I was used to at the time). One of the things I most appreciate about HUCGSM was developing my ability to work in a group, and the friendly, professional environment at the University. I cannot refrain from mentioning the personal merit and devotion needed in building such a University. I will always have HUCGSM in my memory as years of light, hope and success during the difficult, cold and dark days facing Armenia in 1993. I feel very sorry that the University had to close its doors so soon."

Levon Abrahamian currently is engaged in graduate study in business at University of Georgia. He will graduate this year but hasn't shared his plans for the next step, but he did very recently marry a beautiful Armenian woman who now is in Chicago. Prior to his study in Georgia, Levon was a founding partner in a computer trade and services company in Yerevan. After capturing more than half the market, they sold the business to a larger company. Before that, he was Deputy Director and Head of Information Division of the United Nations' Trade Point Armenia. His first position after graduation was one he held during the final months of study at Haigazian, with the Customs Department of the Republic of Armenia.



HUCGSM Board members (l to r) Mr. Joe Stein, Dr. John Markarian and Mr. Herair Mouradian (above). Some of the students of HUCGSM with Dr. Louis Volpp (below).

Levon stated that, "Haigazian established the basis for all my professional activities in Armenia. It could also become an excellent starting point for continuing my education abroad and for a corporate career afterwards."

Mary (Sandicova) Poghosyan is Organizational Development Coordinator of ProSME (Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises). She is also a Director of T&D, Ltd., a training and development enterprise. Mary's son is soon to be three years old, and appears to be the joy of her life.

Vahe Dalian is engaged in graduate study at the London Business School. Before leaving for London, Vahe was Senior Loan Officer of Shore Advisory Services in Yerevan. Earlier he served as Business Consultant with Sharafian Consulting including work for Eurasia Foundation, World Bank,

Armenergo, and two commercial banks. He also was Director of Armenian Small Enterprise Revolving Loan Program in Yerevan.

Vahe writes, "Haigazian was the starting point for my career. It added not only knowledge, but also, which is more important, invaluable experience. I have started to look at things differently. There was a change in mentality. There is one disappointing issue connected with Haigazian — it is a real challenge to be an alumnus of a University that unfortunately does not exist anymore."

Artur Kocharyan completed only one year of the MBA program, and was drafted. In the military, he became a leader in computing for the defense department. After military service, he completed the graduate business program at INSEAD in Fountainbleu, France, the best international business school in the world. At present, Artur is Product Manager with 3Com Europe, Ltd. His product line is OfficeConnect, where he estimates demand and customer needs, develops strategy, interfaces with manufacturing and sales, and deals with product launch.

Artur voices appreciation for the long-lasting friendships formed at Haigazian and for the self-confidence he developed at HUCGSM. He expresses disappointment that the school did not achieve what it could have achieved, despite the goodwill of many people.

Nune Hovanissian wanted especially to express her gratitude for her experience at HUCGSM. During the second year at HUCGSM, Nune taught economics in a secondary school as part of the U.S. Junior Achievement Program. After graduation, she had a contract with TACIS to evaluate the project in Armenia. For that work, she had additional training in Germany, and ended up in Rome to evaluate the program and to recommend what was needed in the future. Then she was contracted by USAID as a business consultant. In 1995, Nune became Field Assistant for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees dealing with developing programs, strategies, and policies regarding the Armenian ethnic refugees from Azerbaijan. She remains with UNHCR as Assistant Program Officer.

Nune says she cannot compare her understanding of life, mentality, and behavior overall before the studies at Haigazian. She recalls that it was not only the courses, but

the general formation of her as an individual, that was so valuable.

"We were so eager to learn the right answer to a cost accounting problem, and you told us there was no one right answer. Life is to prove which is the better answer." She recalls a time when the students were messy in our bathrooms, and we were unable to encourage them to correct their behavior. So the bathrooms were closed. When no student asked why the bathrooms were closed, I asked why there was not inquiry. "Simply we did not dare to ask. We were used to thinking that if it is decided by management, that is it. And many other wise matters." (The students did take responsibility for the bathroom behavior after that.)

Karina Nersessian completed her Ph.D. at Yerevan State University, and now is an Associate Professor there, on leave to work with Chemonics International, Inc. as Capital Markets Component Coordinator. She has been a training specialist in banking in Amman, Jordan. She worked with PricewaterhouseCoopers in Armenia as Head of Training and Financial Analysis Team Leader. Karina managed operation audits and financial analysis of four State enterprises in preparation for privatization. Prior to that she worked at the Eurasia Foundation as Regional Grants Management Officer for the Caucasus Region. And still earlier, she was Business Programs Manager for the Peace Corps in Armenia. Karina intends to continue international consulting and hopes to join a large firm for her long-term career in international business.

She writes, "Haigazian experience meant a whole new world to me. It was like the door to new life, new opportunities, but what's the most important it led to the re-evaluation and restructuring of my future plans, goals and objectives. I don't think I would have gone this far without Haigazian experience. These two years played a major role in my becoming mature and in a



HUCGSM Board of Managers.

sense a "grown up" person, as I was taught to take responsibility, deal with problems independently and professionally. I will never forget rushing through the cold and icy streets to Haigazian to get a spare computer and to finish a case study, and all of this at 6:00 a.m. in the misty morning."

Gayane Dallakyan took over the International Executive Service Corps Office while she was a second year student. One of the Haigazian Vice Presidents managed their office for a short time, and then was hired by IESC to manage their office in Moscow, and that is when Gayane accepted the responsibility. She remained in that position for some years after graduation. At last communication, she was the CEO of BusinessLink, a consulting company in Yerevan specializing in helping Armenian companies wishing to enter the international market.

Tigran Badanian went to work as Vice President in the largest private bank in Armenia. He is in touch with fellow graduates occasionally, and latest information shows him remaining in that bank, doing quite well.

Gueram Sargsyan served as Vice President of Haigazian in 1993-94 and was chief administrator while the President was out of the country, including all of 1994-95. During his service at HUCGSM, Gueram completed his Ph.D. in laser physics, and then went to INSEAD for his graduate degree in international business. He was asked to remain there and currently is doing research on market inefficiency, specifically on "death spiral" convertibles. Gueram is a person I would bet on returning and engaging in work important to Armenia.

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AMAA Sunday - A Homecoming

April 7, 2002 was a special day for the congregation of the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church of Havertown in more ways than one. It was AMAA Sunday and it was a homecoming for their former pastor, Rev. Jirair Sogomian, the Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and his wife Lorraine.

Rev. Sogomian delivered both the Armenian message and the English sermon, and left them with the thoughtful question, "What does the resurrection of Jesus mean for me and the way I live today?"

After the worship service, the Mission and Outreach Committee of the church had prepared a delicious lunch of lahmajoun, a gourmet salad, and a tray of delectable desserts for each table.

The program included a twenty-minute well-documented film highlighting the activities of the AMAA. The seeds of Chris-

tian faith have been sown in twenty-two cities in Armenia and Karabagh.

After the film, Rev. Sogomian highlighted the areas of mission work and answered many questions. He spoke about the global ministries of the AMAA and the orphan/child sponsorship program, where for \$240 one can sponsor a child in Armenia and make a difference in his/her life. He also talked about the crying needs in the Middle East, where many children are unable to afford to go to school, and for \$200 one can sponsor a child's education. On the church bulletin heartwarm-



Some mission committee members and kitchen work crew for the missions luncheon. (l to r) George Hagopian, Elaine Farashian, Rev. Jirair Sogomian, Susan Scarritt (chairperson), Ruth Melian and Marian Buchakjian.

ing letters from children, accompanied by their pictures were displayed, and fifteen of them were sponsored.

Rev. Sogomian closed by saying, "You are the AMAA. There are people relying not only on your financial help, but on your human resources, as well as your prayers."□

AN AMAA LEGACY...

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Gayne Zargarian was Director of the Preparation Program beginning in September 1994, but the school closed. She then led the faculty already hired to provide service to The State Engineering University Faculty, mainly in teaching technical English for their work. In 1996, she taught English in the aluminum factory in Armenia, and the following year held the position of Senior Scientific Researcher in the Scientific Research Institute of Pedagogy of the Ministry of Science and Education. In that position, she was sent to the University of Iowa in a team of six Armenian educators to develop civic education curriculum and course materials for the seventh grade students in Armenia. That material is now taught in 100 schools. Currently, she is Program Manager for Teaching English as a Foreign Language for the Peace Corps.

Gayne writes, "I became more independent, with higher self-esteem. I acquired leadership skills. HUCGSM provided me

with excellent professional development opportunities. I feel proud of being part of Haigazian and have a sense of loyalty to it."

Larisa Melik-Barghdo has served as Program Officer for the Eurasia Foundation, Director of the Micro Credit Program for Oxfam, Program Director for the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation, Armenia, and now is Executive Director of OSIAFA. She taught English and mathematics in the Preparation Program at HUCGSM.

Larisa wrote, "My experience with HUCGSM was literally opening up to whole new reality and switching on to real life rather than continuing on survival mode of operation. It was an exposure to whole new and different career, and to new opportunities. In very difficult, confused times the HUCGSM set the standard and promoted values far bigger than any MBA program could and would ever aim at. I am sure that many still use that standard as a measure as I do in my life. I cannot thank you more for that."

As disappointed as the graduates were, the Armenian staff members were even more disappointed at the closing of the school. When told that their intended service was not needed, and that HUCGSM would meet its part of the contract provisions (pay for the year), those faculty were stunned that AMAA held such high standards. They then insisted that they would work for the money, and did so by teaching at the State Engineering University.

Still more disappointed were the one hundred students who had completed the Preparation Program and now would not be able to continue into the MBA program. To tell them that it was over for them at HUCGSM was the most difficult task I faced in Armenia.

I imagine now what could have come from a decade of additional work in Armenia. The graduating classes would have grown, probably to about 75 each year. Instead of 13 alumni, there would be about 600 or 700. Perhaps that would have made a significant difference.□

Rev. Sogomian Visits "The Little Church" The AMAA Luncheon at Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church

Immanuel? Yes, the Downey Church. Is there an Armenian church out there? Of course, Sunday, March 10, 2002 proved it in many ways.

With privilege, we welcomed AMAA representatives Rev. and Mrs. Jirair Sogomian. The day began with Rev. Sogomian's sermons from the pulpit then on to a luncheon. A message, video presentation focusing on AMAA in Armenia, and a question-answer period ensued. They were powerful and moving. It was delightful to visit with the couple after so many years.

Other AMAA representations consisted of twenty three (23) flags each representing a nation where the AMAA serves and posters depicting AMAA related projects. David Bordonaro, Immanuel Youth Director, performed *People Need the Lord* and *Shout to the Lord*. Sunday School children Justin Sahagian and Ani Marderosian recited the names of 12 child sponsorship candidates of which ten were adopted. They thanked all sponsors old and new saying, "Thank You For Your Love," the cover of each AMAA

child sponsorship card.

The chairperson's report highlighted some ongoing and new AMAA-related activities: a sister church in Armenia, increased Sunday school involvement and Rev. Joseph Matossian's missionary work in Armenia for which he was commended. Together with AMAA representative Rev. Rene Leonian, hundreds heard the gospel and were baptized.

This little church came out even with the young fellowship women who had served a delicious Armenian buffet; the senior ladies who as-



The Missions' Committee of the Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church (l to r) Janeen Dinke, Queenie Kazarian, Chris Ashkarian, Vahe Ashkarian, Rev. Jirair Sogomian, Rev. Joe Matossian, Araxie Sarchisian, Marlen & Melik Kumjian.

sisted with logistics; and the men who conducted set up tasks. ***So you have it; this little church seemed much bigger that day.*** □

AMAA Meets with Mission Partner, UCC



UCC Treasurer Ann Kiernozek, UCC Collegium member for the Wider Church Ministries Dr. Dale Bishop, AMAA President Andy Torigian, AMAA Executive Director Rev. Jirair Sogomian, UCC Area Executive Peter Makari.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) visited one of their mission partners, the United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries (UCC) Office in Cleveland, Ohio. The AMAA has an outreach program with several mission partners where they mutually help in various projects as well as in emergency assistance in world disasters. Some of the last projects with the UCC were in assisting earthquake victims in El Salvador and on the Indian continent, as well as providing assistance to the September 11, 2001 disaster victims in New York. The UCC, in turn, helps in the AMAA's mission program in Armenia and in the Near East including Lebanon and Syria. The meeting held over 2 days in Cleveland, Ohio was very productive and outlined areas of mutual cooperation in the future. □

Camp Arevelk Grows with Donation from AMAA and Plans for 3rd Summer Session

Camp Arevelk, a relatively new summer camp ministry sponsored by the AEUNA, is taking a big step forward this year, increasing the age range for its 2002 summer program for campers from ages 10-15! This year's program will run from Sunday, August 11, through Saturday, August 17.

Under the direction of Mrs. Sylvia Jizmejian, and her husband, Reverend Ara Jizmejian, participants are hosted by Camp Tri-Mount, a 535 acre Boy Scouts Reservation located in the Catskill Mountains of New York.

Funded by private donations and various AEUNA east coast churches, Camp Arevelk held its first program in the summer of 2000. With great reviews from the campers, as well as their enthusiastic parents, Arevelk felt that it was time to take the big step forward and increase the age limit. "The uncertainties that go along with increasing the age group were held in check by our faith and a very generous \$2000 donation from the AMAA," said Dave Shahbazian, Arevelk's registrar and treasurer. "I support and commend the Jizmejians for their strong belief that investing in our youth will yield great benefits to the AEUNA community in years to come", he added.

Well known for their work within the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship, the Jizmejians have been able to expand the programs and activities they offer to include the summer camp as part of their overall ministry.

Each day, campers have quiet time in the morning with Bible readings and lessons-questions that they maintain in their camp journal which they take home with them when they leave. In addition to their daily speaker and worship service there are sing-a-longs and skits for all to participate in, reinforcing the Word of God. Cabin time in the evening brings the day's events to a close, and allows the campers to reflect on what they have learned and experienced with their friends.

The campers sleep on cots in Army style tents and participate in many outdoor activi-



ties including, swimming, canoeing, hiking, archery, team sports and even a climbing tower, all of which are supervised by trained Boy Scout personnel. The Scouts also provide on-site medical staff and the preparation of all meals. By renting an existing camp facility, Arevelk is able to keep its costs low, and can avoid many of the challenges associated with owning and maintaining a camp facility.

A family style picnic, complete with shish-kebab and all the trimmings, is held

on Saturday, when the parents return to pick up their children. This becomes a wonderful time of fellowship for the adults and campers as they share their stories from the week.

For more information regarding this year's program, or those wishing to provide financial support to Camp Arevelk, please contact Reverend and Sylvia Jizmejian at 508-791-7401 (sjizmejian@yahoo.com), or David Shahbazian, at 845-339-3676 (shabatts@aol.com).□

No Wall Will Stand in the Way

Service of Rededication and Praise at the KCHAG Center in Lebanon

L. Nishan Bakalian

A dream became a reality that Saturday afternoon, May 25th, at the “KCHAG” Conference Center in the hills overlooking Beirut. More than three hundred people, from newborns to the elderly, enjoyed a moment of worship, lifting up prayer and praise to their heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, within the grounds of their very own Armenian Evangelical “Christian Endeavor Summer Center” (called by the acronym of “Kchag”).

Purchased in 1948, and holding its first conference the following year, the Center was built up, improved, and developed with great sacrifice. Buildings went up, roads built, and a basketball court was constructed. Now the present unkempt condition of Kchag is a poignant testimony to more than 12 years of it being under others’ control, with the rightful owners being unable to maintain or improve the site. Yet despite its current run-down condition, nothing was able to quench the high spirits of the crowds attending the service that day. The newly-placed signs at the entrance way, as well as the hand-painted banners hanging overhead bid a warm “Welcome to Kchag” to those who ascended on their “pilgrimage” to the Center’s chapel.

The pathway to the chapel was just as steep as before, the stairs just as exhausting as they were in 1986, the last time an Easter sunrise service or a C.E. conference took place in Kchag. But, amazingly, God renewed each person’s strength “like the eagle’s,” and the service of praise went forward with great enthusiasm.

Opening the program was the chairman of the C.E. Union’s Executive Committee, Pastor Sebouh Terzian, giving words of welcome, along with Miss Vartoug Balekjian, offering a heartfelt prayer. Rev. Nerses Balabanian, along with the “Nor Yerk” ensemble, led an energetic singing time. It was as if the trees and rocks, too, were remembering the familiar strains of



old Armenian hymns, last heard so long ago, while also joining in to learn the new praise songs of the youth.

Two veteran C.E. members, Miss Sona Nashian and Mr. John Sagherian, sharing their memories and words of encouragement, vividly depicted Kchag’s 54-year history through laughter, tears, and occasionally even pain. Their words traversed the years, from Mr. Augustine Badeer’s vision, to the creative antics of young people, to the kitchen spices of a certain women’s conference, to even the tragic deaths that occurred in the Center during the war. But they both affirmed a message higher than all of this, namely that Kchag is holy ground; a place where generations have come to know the Lord Jesus as Savior, where numerous persons have received the call to Christian service, where Armenians and non-Armenians alike have enjoyed God’s blessings.

In the final portion of the program, the Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian laid out the current challenge and the urgency of the hour. Looking to the future, he exhorted those

present to lend their support for the rebuilding of Kchag, which will require not just their material gifts, but especially their earnest prayers. He mentioned the need for a live-in groundskeeper, citing the theft of the engraved Kchag bell from its stand in the previous one or two days. Yet at the same time, he reminded those assembled that God still has much more work to accomplish in Kchag, for which his people will be his co-workers, “to give them a future and a hope” (Jer. 29.11). The ad hoc Emergency Committee, which had already raised half of the projected ten thousand U.S. dollars budgeted for immediate needs, received gifts amounting to another quarter of the total figure that day.

Armenian Evangelical Union President Rev. Megerdich Karagoezian closed the service of rededication, though not in the typical way. Before his closing prayer, he took a sledgehammer in hand and struck determined blows at the wall that had been built to cover the chapel doors, declaring that no wall would stand in the way of the worship of God, nor of this sacred task. □

Տէ՛ր, Տուր Ինծի Քրիստոնեայ Հայաստանը Հեղինակ՝ Վեր. Եսայի Սարմազեան

յ.գ. Վերջերս լոյս տեսաւ Թորոնթոյի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի հովիւ՝ Վեր. Եսայի Սարմազեանի *Տէ՛ր, Տուր Ինծի Քրիստոնեայ Հայաստանը* ֆարոգագիրքը: Ստորեւ կուտանք հրատարակիչին՝ Դոկտ. Երուանդ Հ. Քասունիի Փոխան Յառաջարանի Խօսքը՝ սոյն գիրքին մասին:

Հատորը, որ Հայ Աւետ. Բեմ մատենաշարով կու գայ հրապարակ, արդար գնահատանքի արտայայտութիւն մըն է հանդէպ Հայ Աւետարանական բեմին ծառայողի մը, որ աւելի քան երեք տասնամեակ է որ նաեւ գրաւոր խօսքով կը կատարէ քրիստոնեական հաւատքին ֆարոգութիւնը:

Գնահատանքը՝ տարիներու վրայ ծաւալած ֆանակին համար չէ, այլ՝ որակին: Այդ տասնամեակներուն՝ Վեր. Եսայի Սարմազեան յաջողած է իր պատգամներուն դիմագիծ ու նկարագիր տալ, խորք ու կենդանութիւն ներարկել, բիրենդացնել միտք ու մտահոգութիւն, յղկել լեզուն, միշտ մնալ օրումն եւ ժամանակին հետ, հաւատարիմ ֆաղափար, հայ հողին ու մշակութային ժառանգին սրբութեան հաւատացող հայ, եւ Աստուծոյ Խօսքին անսակարկ սպասարկու:

Գիւղի գաւակ է Վեր. Ե. Սարմազեան: Հողին կենսատու բոյրին կարօտով ապրող մարդ, որ հակառակ հայու նակատագրով ովկէաններ անցնելուն, տակաւին կը շնչէ իր ծննդավայր պաղնաղագով, այդ գիւղէն տարած իր տոկունութեամբ, ինքնավստահութեամբ ու լաւատեսութեամբ դիտելով աշխարհը, որուն հանդէպ իր պարտքն ու պատասխանատուութիւնը վերցուցած է Աստուծոյ առաքելութեան դաշտին մէջ յանձնառու ծառայութեամբ:

Վեր. Ե. Սարմազեանի պատգամները ոչ միայն կը վկայեն իր ունեցած Աստուածաշունչի գիտութեան եւ Աստուածաբանական հարուստ պաշարին մասին, այլեւ՝ այն իրողութեան, որ ան իր լուսարձակը բաց պահած է մարդկայնական այլ գիտութիւններու վրայ, կը ճանչնայ մարդը՝ պատմութենէն ժառանգած եւ առօրեայ իր մտահոգութիւններով ու տագնապներով, գիտէ Աստուծոյ ծրագրին մէջ մարդուն նախապատիւ տեղը, Քրիստոսի առաքելութեան գերագոյն նպատակը, ուրկէ՝ համապարփակ ընկալման փորձը մարդուն մարդկային հարցերուն, զանոնք

պարզաբանելու հմուտ ու խելացի ոնը, եւ ապա՝ միշտ Աստուածաշնչական դեղագիրն ու բալասանը հիւանդն ու հիւանդութիւնները բուժելու:

Մարդկային ընկերութեան մէջ, Վեր. Ե. Սարմազեանի համար կիզակէտ է հայ մարդը, հայ ժողովուրդը, հայ մշակոյթը, Հայ Եկեղեցին, Հայկական Հարցը ու նորանկախ Հայաստանը, եւ ապա բոլորը՝ լուսարձակի տակ առած Քրիստոսի կոչին ընդառաջած հայ մարդու արիութեամբ:

Վեր. Ե. Սարմազեան գիտէ իր պատգամը համեմել մարդկային փորձի ու փորձառութեան իմաստութեամբ, ինչ որ անմատչելին կը դարձնէ անմիջական, հաղորդական եւ ուսանելի:

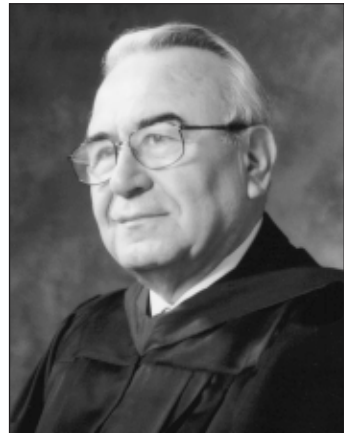
Եւ դեռ՝ ան գիտէ յանկարծ գրոյցի նստիլ իր ընթերցողին հետ, եւ անակնկալի բերել զինք իր հատու եւ զարթուցիչ միջամտութիւններով: Ինքնապաշտպանութեան համար քրիստոնեան զենք պէ՞տք է վերցնէ: Այո՛, կ'ըսէ Վեր. Ե. Սարմազեան, միշտ ապաւինելով Աստուծոյ Խօսքին: Բայց եւ կ'աւելցնէ. «Ան որ չի կրնար զենք վերցնել, թող չվերցնէ (ի սէր Աստուծոյ եւ ազգին... թող չվերցնէ), բայց եթէ կրնայ աղօթել, թող աղօթէ անպայման»: Քանի որ ան կը հաւատայ, թէ՛ «Զ'արժեք ապրիլ կեանքը քանի մը համար, եթէ չ'արժեք նաեւ անոր համար մեռնիլ»:

Վեր. Ե. Սարմազեանի պատգամներուն մէջ տիրող գիծ է լաւատեսութիւնը: Որքան ծանր է դիմագրաւուած տագնապը, այնքան մեծ է Աստուծոյ հանդէպ հաւատքն ու վստահութիւնը, եւ այդ հաւատքով՝ ինքնավստահութեան հրաւերը: Իրն են բառերը՝

«Հաւատա՛թէ կ'ըլլայ, Աղօթէ՛ որ ըլլայ,

Գործէ՛, եւ կ'ըլլայ»:

Հայ Աւետարանական ֆարոգչութեան մէջ Վեր. Եսայի Սարմազեանի այս ֆարոգագիրքը նոր աւանդ է, որ կու գայ նոր շունչով նպաստացնելու մեզի հասած հարուստ ժառանգը: ԵՀԲ



Վեր. Եսայի Սարմազեան

Չկայ Եկեղեցի առանց Սուրբ Հոգիի ներկայութեան եւ զօրութեան: Չկայ Սուրբ Հոգիի ներկայութիւն եւ զօրութիւն՝ առանց աղօթքի: Հաւատք՝ Յիսուսի վրայ, Սուրբ Հոգի եւ Աղօթք՝ Հաւատացեալներուն կեանքերուն մէջ: Ասոնք էին Առաքելական առաջին եկեղեցիին գոյառման, աճումին եւ գոյատեւման երեք նախախնամական եւ կենսական ազդակները: Նոյնը եղած է դարերու ընթացքին, եւ է՛ այսօր:

«Բեթէլ» Եկեղեցիի Պատմագրութիւնը Պատրաստեց՝ Վեր. Պարգեւ Օրջանեան

յ.գ. Վերջերս լոյս տեսաւ Հալէպի Հայ Աւետարանական «ԲԵԹԷԼ» Եկեղեցիի պատմագրութիւնը Վեր. Պարգեւ Օրջանեանի խմբագրութեամբ: Ստորեւ կուտանք Վեր. Գոկտ. Հ. Կ. Հասէսեանի գրախօսականը սոյն հատորին մասին, կարգ մը յապաւումներով՝ տեղի պատճառով:

«Ելլեմք շինեմք, եւ իրենց ձեռքերը ուժովցուցին այս բարի գործին համար:» *Նէեմիայ 2. 18*

Հայը շինարար ազգ մըն է: Իբր գաղթական՝ ծիածանի որ կամարին տակ որ ալ ըլլայ, ան հիմը յիշելով մտքը կը շինէ:

Հալէպի «ԲԵԹԷԼ»-ը, «Սուրբ Խաչ»-ը որ ապա «Սուրբ Գէորգ» եկեղեցին է, եւ Պէյրութի համահայկական «Նոր Մարաշ» գաղութը կոթողներ են, որոնք հայուն շինարար հոգին եւ մկարագիրը կ'արտայայտեն:

1915ի անողորմ ջարդէն հազիւ ազատուած, լման մերկացած իրենց պապեանական բարեկէն, ու բոնի վտարուած իրենց բոյնէն, կողոպտուած, սնանկացած, մերկ ու բոկոտն հայու մնացորդ սփիւռքի կոտորակը ապաստան կը գտնէ Հալէպի անբնակ շրջանի նախնախոտի ամայի դաշտերուն եւ շրջակայ բլուրներուն վրայ: Եւ հոն է որ կը սկսի մորէն շինելու իր հիւղակը ժանգոտած, ծակոտած քիթեղներով, կրկին գործածուած, փտած տախտակներով:

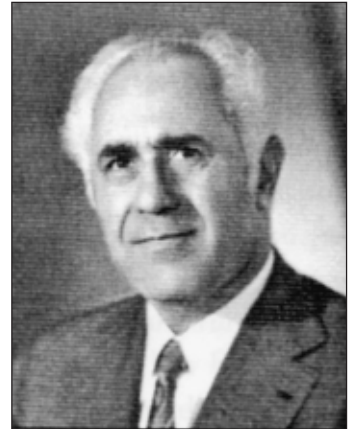
...Գաղթահայ խումբ մը մարաշցի հաւատացեալներ, ի մի գալով ըսին «Ելլեմք շինեմք»: «Թէեւ աղիւսներ ինկան, բայց մենք տաշուած քարերով պիտի շինեմք: Մոլաբզենիները կտրուեցան, բայց մենք անոնց տեղ եղեւնափայտեր պիտի դնեմք:» (Յսայի 9. 10)

Ուրիշներ ըսին, բայց ինչպէ՞ս շինեմք: Հաւատով Աստուծոյ խոստումին ապաւինելով եւ Փրկչին փրկարար ուժին՝ անոնք սկսան ձեռքերին ուժովցնել շինելու նախ Աստուծոյ տաճարը, եւ ապա անոր յարակից վարժարանը մեր տարաբախտ գաւակներուն տոհմային դաստիարակութիւն տալու համար: Սակայն կնքոտ հարց էր թէ ուրկէ պիտի գար նիւթական օգնութիւնը:

Ապաւինած Աստուծոյ եւ Անոր խոստումներուն, իրենց ձեռքերը ուժովցուցին այս բարի գործին եւ Աստուած ալ պէտք եղած նիւթականը հայրապետ իր ժամանակին իրենց հաւատին չափովը:

...Հաւատացեալներուն հաւաքականութիւնը կը բաղկանար գլխաւորաբար մարաշցիներէ: Անոնք իրենց որբի եւ այրի գաղթականի վերջին լուսն դրին Աստուծոյ ձեռքը: Ուստի տուողներն ու տրուածը օրհնուեցան իրենց հաւատին չափովը: Որքան տուին այնքան օրհնուեցան:

...Բեթէլ եկեղեցւոյ պատմութիւնը կորսուած պիտի ըլլար եթէ երբեք Վեր. Պարգեւ Օրջանեան իբր Բեթէլի գաւակ՝ յանձն առած չըլլար պատմականը գրի առնելու: Ան Բեթէլ երկար տարիներ անխոնջ աշխատելով հրատարակեց համայնագիտարան մը Հալէպի Հայ Աւետարանական Բեթէլ Եկեղեցւոյ պատմութեան՝ ամփոփուած 392 մեծածաւալ էջերու մէջ:



Վերապատուելիմ ոչ ջանք, ոչ աշխատանք եւ ոչ ալ իր համեստ լուսն խնայած է ծանօթութիւններ հաւաքելու: Ան մանրամասն եւ խոնամորէն խուզարկած ու սերտած է պատմական դէպքերը եւ պատուական դէմքերը՝ ըլլան անոնք ապրող եւ կամ իրենց աշխատանքէն դադրած յաւիտեանական հանգիստ մտածներ:

Ծանօթութիւնները իմաստութեամբ համադրելով, յօդուածները խմբագրելով, պատուական դէմքերու կենսագրականներն ու հազուագիտ խմբանկարները, նաեւ ակնաւոր անձերու նկարները դասաւորելով իրենց ժամանակագրական շարքով, Վերապատուելիմ Աւետարանական համայնքին յատկապէս, եւ ողջ կրօնական աշխարհի ընդհանրապէս, կը հրաւընէ իր աշխատասիրութեան բեղուն արգասիքը իբր «Շտեմարան Գիտելեաց»: Հայ Աւետարանական Բեթէլ Եկեղեցւոյ Պատմութեան սկիզբն ու անոր գոյատեւման պայքարը, մոխիրէն փսիաք, փսիաքէն քարաշէն «ԲԵԹԷԼ-Աստուծոյ Տունը»՝ նուիրուած սրբավայր մը յատկացուած լոկ պաշտամունքի եւ քովընտի բարձր-նախակրթարանը դաստիարակութեան համար, որուն գոյութեան, յարատեւման եւ զարգացման ողիսականն է որ պատմականօրէն համադրեալ կը հրամցուի հասարակութեան, Վեր. Պարգեւ Օրջանեանի գրչէն «ԲԵԹԷԼ» մակդիրի տակ:

Այս իշխանական հրատարակութեամբ կ'անմահանան Բեթէլն ու Բեթէլցիները, նաեւ իրենց հետ Բեթէլի գաւակ, հաւատքի վեթերան վեր. Պարգեւ Օրջանեան:

Սոյն աշխատասիրութիւնը պատմութիւնն է նաեւ եղեռնէն ազատուած մնացորդ հայորդիներուն որոնք ծալապատիկ եւ բոկոտն նստած են փսիաքներու վրայ, անկէ ելլելով շինած են քարաշէն երկնաբարձ ԲԵԹԷԼ մը:

...Հերակլեան գործ մըն է Բեթէլի եօթանասուն եւ հինգամեայ պատմութեան աշխատասիրութիւնը: Ան կը պահանջէ տեսիլք, անձաճիր աշխատանք եւ պատմաբանութեան արուեստ ու գիտութիւն: Վեր. Պարգեւ Օրջանեան օժտուած է նման յատկութիւններով:

...Վերապատուելիմ վարձատրուած պիտի զգայ երբ տեսնէ թէ մէն մի Բեթէլցի իր տան գրադարանին մէջ «ԲԵԹԷԼ» գիրքէն հատ մը ունի եւ իբր ծնողք անկէ կը կարդայ իր գաւակներուն, ազգականներուն ու բարեկամներուն: Այն ատեն է որ Բեթէլը կը գոյատեւէ: Ներշնչուելով պատմական դէպքերէն ու պատուական դէմքերու կատարած հերոսական գործերէն եւ կեանքէն, մի գուցէ անոնք ալ ներշնչուելով հետեւին իրենց հաւատքի վեթերան առաջնորդներու շարիղէն:

Պատուելի, վարձաք կատար, կեանք երկար, գրիչդ յար մնայ դալար: ՀԿՀ

1700-ԱՄԵԱԿԻ ԱՍՏՈՒԱԾԱՇՈՒՆՁԸ

Հայաստանի մէջ քրիստոնէութեան պետականացման 1700-ամեակի բարերաստիկ առիթով՝ հրատարակուեցաւ արեւմտահայերէն Աստուածաշունչի հիմնովին վերամշակուած հրատարակութիւն մը: Արդի խօսակցական լեզուին ու գործածուած բառերուն կարելի եղածին չափ մօտ, բիրենդացած ռոնով զուտ աշխարհաբարի վերածուած, երբայերէն եւ յունարէն բնագիրներուն բացարձակապէս հաւատարիմ ու տառացի սոյն թարգմանութեան նպատակն է ԻԱ. դարու ընթերցողին դիւրըմբռնելի դարձնել Աստուծոյ Խօսքին կենսատու պատգամը, գայն ձեռքագատելով ժամանակավրէպ հնարանութիւններէ: Անոր իմաստը հարազատօրէն արտայայտելու համար գործածուած են մօտ հազար նոր եզրեր միմիայն Հին Կտակարանին մէջ: Նմանապէս հարստացած է Նոր Կտակարանի բառապաշարը: Բազմաթիւ էջատակ բացատրութիւններ կը դիւրացնեն իմաստասիրական եւ մարգարէական գիրքերուն ընթերցումը. նաեւ ջանք թափուած է վերարտադրելու ասոնց բանաստեղծական շարադրութիւնը, նոխացնելով թարգմանութեան գրական արժէքը:



Ներկայ վերանայումին մէջ իբր սկզբունք որդեգրուած է բնագրի իւրաքանչիւր բառին համար օգտագործել համապատասխանող մէկ հայերէն եզր: Սակայն եթէ առաջինը իմաստի նրբութիւններ ունի, զանոնք արտայայտելու համար գործածուած են զանազան եզրեր, օգտուելով մեր լեզուին նոյն բառապաշարէն: Դոյզն անհասկացողութիւն յարուցանող որեւէ նախադասութիւն մանրակրկիտ քննութեան ենթարկուած է, եւ իմաստը՝ պարզաբանուած, առանց շեղելու բնագրին պարունակած բառերէն. հակառակ պարագային, երբ տարբեր եզր մը նախընտրուած է, փոփոխութիւնը նշուած է: Հագուագիտ հայերէն բառերու իմաստն ալ պարզաբանուած է էջատակ նօթագրութեամբ:

Անձնական թէ աշխարհագրական անուններու անկանոն տառադարձութիւնները շտկուած են, ուղղագրական սխալները՝ սրբագրուած, եւ քերականական օրէնքները՝ յարգուած: Յատուկ ուշադրութեան առարկայ եղած է կէտադրութիւնը, ու մասնաւորաբար՝ շեշտադրումը, ինչպէս նաեւ իրերայաջորդ բառերու փաղցրահնչութիւնը, ընթերցումը (մանաւանդ երբ բարձրաձայն կը կատարուի) հասկնալի ու գրաւիչ դարձնելու համար. նոյն նպատակին կը ծառայէ որդեգրուած հեզասահ ռիթմը, օգտագործելով հայ լեզուի ֆոնոլոգիան՝ բայերու խոնարհումին առնչութեամբ՝ եւ խուսափելով աւելորդ կրկնութիւններէ:

Ամէն սիւնակի տակ տեղ գրուած են նախորդ հրատարակութիւններէն պակասող վկայութիւնները: Անոնցմէ իւրաքանչիւրը նշուած համարը կը կապէ ուրիշներու հետ՝ որոնք կը շօշափեն նոյն նիւթը, ունին նման իմաստ կամ տարբեր տեսանկիւն, կը պարունակեն նոյնաման բառեր, եւ կամ կը վերաբերին միեւնոյն անձերուն կամ վայրերուն: Գործածուած են վերջակէտեր՝ երկու գլուխներ կամ գիրքեր իրարմէ գատելու, միջակէտներ՝ գլուխ մը համարներէն բաժնելու, եւ ստորակէտեր՝ ասոնք զանազանելու նպատակով: Սոյն մէջբերումները ընթերցողը կը մղեն ընդարձակ ուսումնասիրութիւններու, որովհետեւ «ամբողջ Գիրքը աստուածաշունչ է, եւ օգտակար՝ սորվեցնելու, կշտամբելու, ուղղելու եւ արդարութեան մէջ կրթելու համար:» 2 Տիմ. 3. 16:

Կասկածէ դուրս է թէ ամէն ընտանիք, եկեղեցի թէ դպրոց ապահովելու է օրինակ մը սոյն մեծածաւալ (1.8 x 8 x 11 inches) ու գունաւոր փարտէսներով նոխացած Սուրբ Գիրքէն որուն իւրաքանչիւր օրինակը կ'արժէ 20.00 Ամերիկեան տոլար, առաւել առաժման ծախսը: Այս Աստուածաշունչէն օրինակներ ստանալու համար հանեցէ՛ք լեցնել ետեւի կողմին վրայ գտնուող կտրօնը եւ գայն դրկել Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան Կեդրոնատեղին:□

Mary Mehagian

Mary Matilda Mehagian, 98, a long-time Valley resident, passed away Tuesday, March 26, 2002, with her family by her side. Her long life has left her family with many cherished memories. Mary was born in Armenia on April 22, 1903 to Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Armenag H. Haigazian. She came to the United States after World War I with her mother and five sisters. She and her late husband, A. Stephen were married October 30, 1924 and moved to Phoenix in November 1928 from San Francisco. On March 11, 1929, Stephen and Mary opened a small oriental rug and carpet store in downtown Phoenix, the predecessor of the present Mehagian's home furnishings company in Phoenix and Scottsdale. Mary dedicated much of her time to charitable community endeavors. The first antique sale for Goodwill was held at her home. Mary served on the Salvation Army Auxiliary, Phoenix Symphony Guild, the Phoenix Little Theatre and hosted social functions for the YMCA Board and its International visitors. She was past President of the Rotary Anns of Phoenix 100 Rotary Club. She was a member of the Church of the Beatitudes and the Armenian Apostolic Church. In 1955, she helped found the local chapter of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), a humanitarian organization. In memory of her father, Mary and her husband were instrumental in co-founding Haigazian College in Beirut, Lebanon, where a large Armenian community prevailed after being dispersed during World War I. The school was named after her father, a well known educator and a doctorate graduate of Yale University. For 15 years, Mary was in charge of a popular benefit dinner to raise funds for the school. Preceded in death by her husband, A. Stephen Mehagian in 1980, she is survived by her two sons, Arthur Stephen (Peggy) and John Armen (Marjorie). Children of Arthur Stephen – Mary Ann (Mark), Peggy Louise (Edward), Stephen (Martine), and Carol Sue. Children of John Armen – Laurie, Douglas, Diane (Scott), Stephanie (Tim) and Mary Christine (Roger). Six great-grandchildren, Lia (Joshua), Tera, Mark, Jr., Mariam, Eric, Michael, and great-great grandchildren Reid, Campbell, and Truman. Also survived by three sisters, Nelly Constantian of Sierra Madre, CA, Pansy Irish of San Diego, CA, and



Ruth Strachan of Berkeley, CA, and nieces and nephews. Private family memorial services have been held at the Church of the Beatitudes, the Rev. Dr. Stephen L. Sterner, officiating. Arrangements by A.L. Moore Grimshaw Bethany Chapel. A special note of thanks to Posey Moore Nash for her love and assistance to our family. Also to Ruth Ann Masch for her loving care and to the staff at Orangewood Retirement Community, Health Center South, for their devoted care of our Mother. A memorial contribution may be made to the AMAA, 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652. □

Arminé D. Berberian

(September 21, 1907 - March 22, 2002)

by Raffi Robert Berberian

A resident of Loudonville for the past 55 years, Arminé Berberian died of a stroke at her home on March 22, 2002. She was 94. She was a native of Marash, Turkey, where she attended Protestant Church schools. The daughter of Dr. Vartan Poladian and Leah Sarkissian Poladian, her father was one of three physicians serving that city with a population of 60,000. Her maternal grandfather was the Reverend Harootune Sarkissian, a Presbyterian clergyman, ordained in 1852, who settled in New Haven, Connecticut. In the Marash War of January 1920, her mother, Leah, was fatally shot by a stray bullet, and the following year, her father married Araxie Kouyoumjian, (nee Haidostian), a schoolteacher herself widowed (with a baby boy) by the massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.



Driven out of Turkey, the Poladian family relocated in Aleppo, Syria. Soon after, the young Arminé departed Syria for San Francisco, CA. She graduated from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA, with a Master's degree in Christian Education.

In 1932, she returned to the Near East, where she married Dicran Abraham Berberian, a childhood friend, who had become a physician in Beirut, Lebanon, serving in the American University of Beirut. In Beirut, Mrs. Berberian was active in her church and in the university community, particularly in music and drama events. The Berberians' three children were born in Beirut and spoke Armenian as their first language.

Answering a call from the Albany Medical

College, Dr. Berberian immigrated with his family to the United States in 1947, where he served as Senior Member and Director, and Staff Physician of the Sterling-Winthrop Research Institute in Rensselaer. Mrs. Berberian swiftly became involved in local organizations including: The Monday Musical Club; the League of Women Voters; the Capital Artists Resident Opera Company and the Capitol Hill Choral. She was a faithful member of the Cilician Student Association of Troy, New York, the AMAA and the AGBU. She was a founding member of the Loudonville Community Church. At the Community Church, she served as Sunday school and VBS teacher and director, chairperson of the Music Committee and church choir and Mary-Martha Women's Circle. She served as a soprano soloist at Sunday worship services. With her husband, she often visited newcomers to Loudonville, inviting them to church services.

From 1954 until 1977, the Berberian family lived in Colonial Homestead, also known as Georgian Hall, a landmark Loudonville mansion built in 1907, where she was celebrated as a brilliant hostess. The Berberian home was a frequent stop for visitors from many parts of the world. Mrs. Berberian was an advocate for the arts and culture of Armenia, leading a local dance troupe and providing the group with authentic ethnic costumes. She was an accomplished dressmaker. Her interests included china painting, drying flowers from her gardens, arranging them artfully, and supporting her children's and grandchildren's artistic and cultural interests. She took great interest and pride in her son-in-law Tom Jr.'s Bible commentary compilations and writings about Nepal and in Tom and Cynthia's missionary endeavors.

After a moderate stroke in 1996, she required around-the-clock care in her home by the devoted attendance of her children, Cynthia and Raffi, and a splendid cadre of caregivers who became a cherished part of her life. Her surviving family acknowledges with gratitude the attentive visits of so many who were dear to her heart.

Mrs. Berberian is survived by her daughter, Dr. Cynthia Berberian Hale of Loudonville, her son, Raffi Robert Berberian of Boston, Massachusetts, two grandsons, Thomas Hale III and Christopher Dicran Hale, and two great grandsons, Thomas Hale and Gregory Christopher Hale. Her husband, Dicran Abraham, and her other son, Dicran Aram, both died in 1987.

Memorial donations may be made for the Berberian Fund of the Loudonville Community Church, the AMAA or the Scholarship Fund of The Monday Musical Club. □

Siranoush Hassessian

Siranoush Margossian Hassessian was born in Turkey some ninety years ago. Her celebrated birthday was July 21, 1912, however, no one really knows her true date of birth. During the Armenian Genocide of 1915, she was somewhere around three years old. She remembers walking with her mother and her brother to somewhere. This turned out to be the death march in the desert of Der-el-zor. It was there that she became separated from her mother and brother. It was the last time she would see her family.



photo by H. Koundakjian

In miraculous ways, she was admitted to orphanages in Aleppo, Syria, and Juni, Ghazir, Sayda and Beirut in Lebanon. In the Armenian American High School for Girls in Beirut, she caught the attention of the school's directors, Miss Webb and Miss Davis. They not only encouraged, but made possible her desire to become a nurse. She graduated with a nursing degree from the American University of Beirut. She never ceased to thank God for His intervention through them.

After some ninety years of gracing her family and friends with her presence, God called her home on March 15, 2002. She is survived by her husband of 62 years, Rev. Dr. Herald Hassessian, two sons, Garabed and Herag, daughter-in-law Vicki, and grandson Jonathan and granddaughter Aimee and her husband Jarred, and many nieces and nephews.

First and foremost, Siranoush was a godly woman. She was the living embodiment of the woman of Proverb 31. She brought honor and fortune to her husband. Her family was always clothed and fed. She prayed incessantly. She read her bible daily until her eyesight failed.

The Bible says that we should love God with all our hearts, and she did. Christ told us to love our neighbors, and she did. He said "Love your enemies", and she did. She said that love was everything and nothing could stand in its way. The Bible teaches to do good to others, and she took every opportunity to do that. She seldom said "No!", yet her "Yes!" always meant yes, and not probably. She made her requests prayerfully. When trials and tribulations came, she thanked God and praised Him. She endured her sorrows quietly and graciously, and she rejoiced with others in their happiness. She showed wisdom and under-

standing by her good life, and deeds were done in humility.

A memorial service was held on Tuesday, March 19 to which most of the area ministers participated. The family requests that contributions in lieu of flowers be given to the AMAA for Orphan and Child Care programs in Armenia. □

Louisa Merjanian

Louisa Merjanian Piranian went to be with the Lord on March 16, 2002.

She grew up in a Christian home where the exemplary life of her parents inspired and encouraged her for her life of service.

She showed interest in taking care of sick people when she was only five years old. Serving the needs of people gave meaning and fulfillment all through her life.

After graduating from the nursing school of the American University of Beirut, she was invited by the University to supervise and instruct the nursing students.

After her marriage to Simon Piranian, they became partners in Louisa's varied endeavors. She taught Home Economics and Health-Wellness in three Armenian high schools in Beirut, Lebanon. She enriched and energized the lives of her students. And today they try to emulate her joy and vitality in their own lives. Below are a few comments from her students:

She became a blessing to our community.

She is a poised, gracious and dignified person, she commands the respect of her students.

She listens intently and patiently to our needs and with caring.

She is a fine steward of the talents God has given her.

Our classroom was always filled with joy and fun.

Her book "The Pleasure of Cooking" became a best seller. It was used as a textbook in her classroom.

She continued her ministry at CMC (Christian Medical Center), with two dedicated doctors, Dr. Puzant Krikorian and Dr. Peter Manougian. To alleviate their pain and suffering became their daily concern.

After they came to Pasadena, California, she led the Women's Fellowship group at the Armenian Brotherhood Bible Church, every week for thirteen years. She relied strongly on the words of St. Paul, "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13



She visited sick people in their houses and at times she took care of them for weeks in their home.

Louisa left an indelible mark on the many lives she touched. Several young women were attracted to her noble profession of nursing.

Louisa is now at peace enjoying the presence and glory of her heavenly Father, whom she loved and served. □

Manuel Minas Manoukian

August 11, 1922 - October 22, 2001

Manuel and John were the first twins born to Minas and Magdalene, in a mountain village called Baskinta. After two years, George, and his twin sister, Georgette, were born. They had a happy childhood and lived a simple life.



Later, when the children had to go to High School, the family moved to Beirut. The children learned Arabic, French, English and Armenian. But it was not easy for them to adjust to city life.

From the start, Manuel had the gifts of an artist and inventor. Before World War II, he was taking music lessons from the head of the Music Conservatory in Lebanon. His French music teacher told him that he has special talent and should never quit. But because of the war, when the teacher left the country, the music lessons had to stop.

Manuel loved nature. He loved it so much that he taught himself to paint, and his love for nature is clearly expressed in each of his paintings. In addition to painting nature, he also loved to taste and eat whatever nature offered. He accomplished this by planting fruit trees in his backyard as well as the backyards of his friends and family.

After Manuel's sister Georgette and her husband Frank came to America, they eventually sponsored all the family to come to the United States. As the bachelor big brother, Manuel took care of his siblings and their offspring as they came to America.

Manuel spoke a lot about heaven, to make sure that his family and neighbors knew Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. Because of his actions, he was instrumental in the growth of a godly generation. Manuel knew how to give, even giving of himself, to his family, to his neighbors, and to missionary work worldwide. He brought glory to God, whom he served well, with the example of his life. □

Rose Mary Serrajian Kaye

Rose Mary was born in Bardezac, Turkey, on April 3, 1911, the first of 5 children. Her parents, Hovhannes and Haiganoush Serrajian were very active in the Armenian Congregational Church all their lives. They came to the United States in 1912, arriving in the New York City area. Their entire family and extended family were fortunate that they were able to leave Turkey before the Genocide. In 1914 they moved to the Bridgeport, Connecticut area where other members of the extended family lived. They moved to Detroit when Rose was about 14. She graduated from High School in 1929.

While she became active in the Junior League of the AGBU, she met her future husband, Vincent Keshishian Kaye. They were married in October 1935.

Vincent and Rose have been active in the Armenian Congregational Church of Greater Detroit virtually all their lives.

Rose Kaye made her transition from this world to eternity on March 9, 2002. Her funeral services were held on Thursday, March 14 at the Armenian Congregational Church of Detroit and the interment took place at Woodlawn Cemetery. Memorial gifts were received by her church and the AMAA.□

Arthur Odabashian

Arthur Odabashian, 73, of Wynnewood, a pediatrician who treated patients from many ethnic backgrounds in his office in Yeadon, Delaware County, for more than 30 years, died of heart failure on Wednesday at Bryn Mawr Hospital.

Fluent in five languages, Dr. Odabashian had patients whose nationalities included Armenian, Russian, Iranian and African-American. His son, Stephen, said that whatever their heritage, children and parents loved "Dr. O."

"The house was constantly flooded with cards, flowers, cookies, and drawings from his patients and their parents," his son said. "He would never let us throw out the children's drawings."

Dr. Odabashian was born in Krasnodar, Russia, to Armenian parents. The family fled to Iran to escape communist rule when he was 4. He was educated in Tehran, Iran, and received a medical degree from Tehran University.

In 1961, he and his family emigrated to America, living in New York City for a year before moving to Philadelphia.

After completing a residency at Hahnemann University Hospital, he joined the pediatric staff of Misericordia Hospital in Philadelphia. He later joined the pediatric staffs of Delaware

County Memorial Hospital in Upper Darby and Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital in Drexel Hill.

In the 1960s, he opened a private practice in Yeadon. He also had evening hours one night a week in his home in Wynnewood. Health problems forced him to retire in 1995.

He was a member of the parish council of St. Mark's Armenian Catholic Church in Wynnewood and was a devoted Phillies fan.

In addition to his son, he is survived by his wife of 46 years, Rita Der Bedrossian Odabashian; daughters Tania Scharpf and Lara Croy; and a granddaughter.

A funeral was held on Saturday at St. Mark's Armenian Catholic Church of Wynnewood, PA.□

Madeline Manoogian

Madeline of Winchester, MA passed away on May 4, 2002, just shy of her 91st birthday. She was the second child of Vahan and Aghavnie Manoogian. Madeline had one sister, the late Nervarte Smith of Klamath Falls, Oregon, and two brothers, the late Archie Manoogian of Byfield, MA, and Edward Manoogian of Everett, MA.

Madeline showed a talent for art at an early age. After graduating with honors from Everett High School, she attended the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. During her college years, Madeline worked as a waitress in the summer at the Fairmont Hotel in York Beach, MA. She graduated in 1932 during the darkest days of the depression. She did some free lance work, and also worked occasionally as a substitute teacher in the Everett Public Schools.

She finally obtained a job as a greeting card designer at the Doehla Card Company in Fitchburg, MA and she lived and worked in Fitchburg for several years. Later she came to Boston, and worked for the Chilton Greeting Card Company. Later she went to work in the ship design section of the Boston Naval Shipper, from which she retired.

Madeline had two particular passions in life – the protection and preservation of the environment, and the humane treatment of animals. She was a generous person, giving freely to benevolent animal, and environmental organizations, even though she lived a very frugal and simple life herself.

As she grew older, she gradually withdrew from society, and lived a simple and Spartan life, content to listen to her favorite classical music on the radio, and commune with nature while she fed the birds, squirrels and chipmunks.

Madeline was unique. She was one of a kind. Thoreau's verse describes her appropriately. "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away."□

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends whose names were submitted to us for publication in the AMAA News.

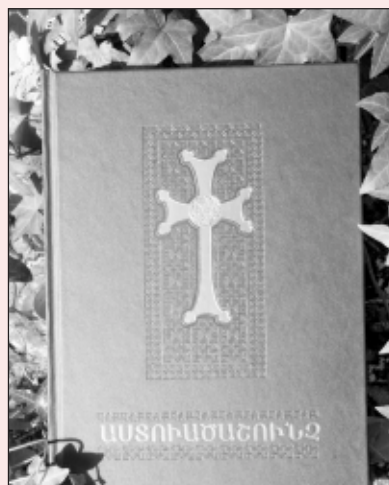
- * **Antoian, Grace**
- * **Assadourian, Fred**
North Bergen, NJ
- * **Aoundaki, Nicolas**
- * **Bedoyan, Henry**
Pico Rivera, CA
- * **Charleson, Helen**
Cranston, RI
- * **Chickalian, Norma**
Rochester, MI
- * **Daisy (Talanian), Rose Fesjian, Suren D.**
Pelham Manor, NY
- * **Gabadian, Maritza**
- * **Gulezian, Jennie**
San Gabriel, CA
- * **Hampartzoumian, Nevart**
Los Angeles, CA
- * **Ilanjian, Marie**
Spring Valley, NY
- * **Kashishian, Sonia**
Westwood, NJ
- * **Kochakian, Martha**
Methuen, MA
- * **Manougian, Charles**
N. Attleboro, MA
- * **Mardirosian, Gary**
Emerson, NJ
- * **Markarian, Yervant**
Sherman Oaks, CA
- * **Nalbandian, Ayko**
Paramus, NJ
- * **Nazarian, Haroutune**
San Jose, CA
- * **Papazian, Peter**
Wayne, NJ
- * **Parseghian, Marie**
Park Ridge, NJ
- * **Renjilian, James**
Germantown, MD
- * **Sarafian, Sylvia**
Fresno, CA
- * **Stone, Barbara**
DeLand, FL
- * **Talanian, Gerald**
- * **Talanian, Hidy**

* Memorials were designated for AMAA.

THE 1700TH ANNIVERSARY ARMENIAN REFERENCE BIBLE IS OFF THE PRESS

On the occasion of the 1700th Anniversary of Armenian Christianity, a special edition of the Western Armenian Bible was recently published by the Bible Society of Lebanon. The project was headed by The Rev. Manuel Jinbachian, with the major contributions of Dr. Ari Topouzkhanian and The Rev. Hovhannes Karjian.

As Dr. Topouzkhanian puts it: "In the end our goal was to make the old translation into something contemporary that could be well understood by Western Armenians in the 21st century. We didn't neglect making



ing the translation as true as possible to the original texts, but we worked hard on making the Armenian fluent. When reading it you will find the brilliance in clarity and all Armenians will rejoice that archaic expressions that are no more in use have been excluded."

The end-result is just great. In our hands we've got a Bible in a language that can be understood and a joy to read. The typesetting is beautiful, the references are in the right place and the full-colour maps on the inside of the cover make the Bible into a magnificent work. This hard cover Bible is available in green and the size of this 1700 page Bible is 1.8 x 8 x 11 inches. The price of each copy is \$20.00. If you are interested in owning a copy of this unique edition of the Bible, please fill out the form and send it with your check to the AMAA.□

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Please forward _____ copies of the newly published Armenian Bible @ US \$20.00 (Can.\$30.00) each, for a total of \$_____ plus \$_____ for postage.

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